

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART  
CLEVELAND 6. OHIO

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FOR RELEASE

Metzler 7.15.62  
Mastroianni 7.14.62  
At will  
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### PRINTS AND DRAWINGS BY GABOR PETERDI

An exhibition of PRINTS AND DRAWINGS BY GABOR PETERDI opens at The Cleveland Museum of Art on July 17.

Peterdi, a master of the most diverse graphic processes, is working at a period in America's art history when interest in prints has been heightened by a general, lively concern for the fine arts. Peterdi is a leading figure in the dynamic contemporary print movement existing today.

In 1959 the Brooklyn Museum held a large retrospective exhibition which included an impression of every print made by Peterdi through the years 1934-1959. The Cleveland exhibition concentrates mainly on the works done by him since then. It also celebrates the publication of Peterdi's WISTERIA for the members of the Print Club of Cleveland. It becomes their fortieth annual presentation print.

Peterdi, born in 1915 near Budapest, held his first one-man show in 1930 at the age of fourteen. During the same year he received the Prix de Rome for his painting and spent the following year in Rome. He then went to Paris where he had his first absorbing experiences with printmaking in Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17 which was the center of avant garde activities in the graphic arts. He first exhibited in Paris at the Salon Surindependents<sup>s</sup>.

Peterdi moved to the United States in 1939 and became a citizen in 1944. Settling in New York he rejoined Hayter's Atelier 17 which by that time had moved there from Paris. Since then he has made prints without interruption.

Peterdi taught at the Brooklyn Museum Art School where he established a graphic workshop. He then taught at Hunter College where he again set up workshop. He is now associate professor of art at Yale University.



No other artist has been more closely associated with the growth of contemporary printmaking than Gabor Peterdi. His works are pure distillation - decisive and brilliant. A sinuous line mimics the form of bare branches. Whole landscapes appear from systems of lines, zig-zags and dots. Dots convey the feeling of abundance and delicacy of foliage, and turbulent, opposing slashes display the violent aspects of nature. Peterdi has something to say. He says it vigorously and with great intelligence and terrific imagination. Those who knew the horrors of World War II will be deeply moved by the intensity and symbolism of his work as seen in THE VISION OF FEAR which is one of the most complex intaglio prints ever attempted.

With the same tools, but with a different segment of his mind directing, he has documented such wondrous scenes as HONEYSUCKLE, THE BIG SUMMER and THE MORNING AFTER.

In this exhibition you will see the composite of a man who might have been great in any field - but who chose art. Art is fortunate as are those who are privileged to see this exhibition which will occupy the Prints and Drawings Gallery through September 16.

Meter - WISTERIA 33198  
Mastroianni - Wounded Darkness 33499-E  
Bruner - Desert I - 33499  
Kirkwood - Rockscape - 33499 D  
Desert II - 33499-A  
Petified Butterfly  
33499-B

## Foreword

A heightened interest in prints on the part of both collector and  
 artist is one facet of the lively concern for the fine arts in the  
 United States today. <sup>4 intro. a type</sup> No artist has been more closely <sup>associated with</sup> involved with  
~~the growth of contemporary~~  
~~the growing interest in~~ printmaking than Gabor Peterdi. He developed  
 from that fertile seed bed of twentieth century graphic artists,  
 Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17. He himself is one of the country's  
 outstanding teachers in the field. He has written a definitive text-  
 book for printmakers. (But of overriding importance is the fact that  
 his own prints are among the foremost products of the contemporary  
 print renaissance.)

The present exhibition, which celebrates the publication by The Print  
 Club of Cleveland of Peterdi's Wistaria as its 1962 presentation print,  
 concentrates attention on Peterdi's recent prints. The large retrospec-  
 tive exhibition of Peterdi's prints held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1959  
 included an impression of every print he had made to that date. This  
 exhibition is designed to supplement the 1959 exhibition by showing all  
 the prints Peterdi has made since, so that the catalogs of the two  
 exhibitions together form a complete listing of Peterdi's prints through  
 1961. However, a selection of his prints of the last ten years is  
 included to show the background of Peterdi's recent work, while the  
 drawings, which date back to 1933, in themselves form a little retro-  
 spective exhibition of Peterdi's style.

Since Peterdi's career was recorded in detail by the catalog of the  
 Brooklyn retrospective exhibition, a brief résumé will suffice here.

See note  
 on other  
 Peter  
 1940.



3 [ Gabor Peterdi was born near Budapest in 1915 of poet parents. ~~in an~~  
~~artistic circle.~~ At fourteen he received his first one-man show and  
the Prix de Rome for painting. He studied one year in Rome, then in  
1931 moved on to Paris. There, at Atelier 17, he made his first  
prints (so engrossed in the possibilities of engraving that he worked  
exclusively in that medium for several years). In 1939 he migrated  
to New York and the following year moved to Florida where he worked on  
a farm and painted. Two drawings in the exhibition, Wild Horses (no. 68)  
and Young Bull (no. 69) are mementos of the Florida period. In 1942  
Peterdi returned to New York and two years later, on becoming an Ameri-  
can citizen, he joined the army and served in Germany in combat. After  
discharge from the army Peterdi returned to New York where in 1947 he  
rejoined Hayter's Atelier 17, ~~Resurrection of the Dead and the Living~~ and  
from then on has continued to make prints without interruption. By  
1949 Peterdi was teaching at the Brooklyn Museum Art School where he  
established a graphic workshop. In 1951, on moving to Rowayton,  
Connecticut, he had greater room for his personal studio and print  
workshop, and for the press he had bought previously. [At the same time  
Peterdi began teaching at Hunter College, then at the Yale Norfolk  
Summer School, and finally at Yale University where he is now an associ-  
ate professor of art.]

4 The first prints in the exhibition, made in 1953, show Peterdi's  
\* complete mastery of the most <sup>diverse</sup> ~~various~~ intaglio print processes. They ~~also~~  
also indicate the recurrent themes which, with variations, mark the  
unifying thread in Peterdi's work. From a background of surrealist

Subject

influence in Paris just before the war, from memories of the stifling threat of war, of the reality of war, and of war's aftermath, and from his awareness of the resilience and fecundity of nature, Peterdi has distilled his subjects. The Seed and the Rock (no. 3) and The Life of the Sponge (no. 2) of 1953 celebrate the continuous welling of life in the depths of earth and ocean. [In the same year Peterdi created from his memory of war and the brooding unease of the nuclear age The Vision of Fear (no. 5), one of the most complex intaglio prints ever attempted.]

productiveness  
fecundity  
fertility }

Though Peterdi's prints have never been completely non-objective, some of his most abstract subjects occur in a group of technically brilliant prints which contrast pure velvet blacks with bright translucent color, for example Dark Horizon (no. 6) of 1954, Glowing Tree (no. 21, pl. ) of 1958, and The Pregnant Earth (no. 35, pl. ) of 1959. Desert I (no. 50, pl. ) of 1961 seems partly an outgrowth of these, but also harks back in its forms to the earlier germination themes.

Yet pure linear engraving and etching progress side by side with the artist's development of the most intricate processes. Beginning in 1956 a number of prints recreate natural images in terms of etched and engraved lines in Peterdi's very personal graphic "handwriting." A sinuous line mimics the form of bare branches in The Big Tree (no. 13). Whole landscapes such as Winter II (no. 12, pl. ) and Frozen Hills (no. 20) take shape from systems of lines, zig-zags, and dots. The large plate Cathedral (no. 18, pl. ) of 1958 uses an all-over tapestry of small lines, circles, and dots to convey the abundance and the delicacy of foliage, while the violent aspects of nature appear in the turbulent, opposed slashes of Angry Sky (no. 29, pl. ). Wistaria, the Print Club's publi-

Wistaria  
 cation (no. 42, pl. ), is numbered among the lyrical landscape prints of this group. In many of these prints, Peterdi mixes a color, usually green or brown, with the black ink to achieve a muted ink color which is particularly effective in the warm, delicate tone of the background resulting from the artist's careful hand-wiping of the plate for each impression.

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 7 1/2  
 Some of Peterdi's recent work is haunted by the surrealist origins of his style. The stone themes exemplified by Burning Rocks (no. 32, pl. ) are horrifying in their desolation, while the magnificent cliff and rock prints, Vertical Rocks (no. 39, pl. ), Cliffs (no. 46, pl. ), and The Big Rock (no. 45, pl. ), are both lyrical and threatening with the ambivalence of a dream vision.

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 The measure of Peterdi's stature as an artist is shown best, however, in the number of prints which cannot be squeezed into any of the categories briefly sketched above. The Fisherman, Petrification, ~~supposedly~~ The Studio, The Bull, Volcanos, Petrified Butterfly, Dark Mountain and Red Mountain, Painted Desert, all attest to the variety and fertility of the artist's imagination. The one quality common to all of Peterdi's prints is the fusion of his visual imagination with his mastery of print processes so that his prints develop through the natural interaction of the two--imagination demands appropriate technical invention and technical invention in turn stimulates a new vision.

Louise S. Richards

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Prints and Drawings by Gabor Peterdi\*

July 17 through September 16, 1962

The exhibition of prints and drawings by Gabor Peterdi is being assembled with emphasis on the artist's most recent work, especially the twenty-five etchings, engravings and aquatints done since the large retrospective exhibition of Peterdi's prints held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1959. Gabor Peterdi, who works mainly in the intaglio print processes in both black and white and color, is a gifted artist and superlative craftsman and one of America's leading figures in the dynamic contemporary print movement.

The exhibition marks the publication of the fortieth annual presentation print of The Print Club of Cleveland, Wistaria, an etching and engraving by Peterdi. Besides prints it will include a select group of the artist's drawings.

An illustrated catalog of the exhibition will be available.

\*Note : We have not yet seen the drawings and do not know whether they are all fairly recent work. If they prove to be so, the title of the exhibition will be Recent Prints and Drawings by Gabor Peterdi.

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